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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #05341-84
17 September 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth
National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Update on Reagan-Gromyko Outlook

1. The weekend has produced new developments which stir up the waters and leave the outlook for Gromyko's visit more uncertain. On balance, however, the outlook is still pretty negative.

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R Soviet solicitation of a meeting with Mondale is an effort to mute the political benefit to the President of his meeting with Gromyko. It would not seem realistic to an American observer, but the Soviets may harbor some illusion, or at least, hope that they can help the challenger in some way. Over the past year they have repeatedly underestimated the backfire potential of their own tactics.

The very unusual TASS story about the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 has been incompletely, and probably mistakenly read in our media as heralding a "deal with the devil." The parallels between the language used in the article to describe Nazi Germany and Soviet rhetoric on the Reagan administration invites this reading. Yet the opening message is different: "Exactly 45 years ago, on September 15, 1939, the newspaper Pravda wrote in its leading article devoted to a call up of Soviet citizens to the Red Army: 'The Soviet Union, its armed forces should be in full combat readiness so that rapidly developing events should not take us unawares.' A fortnight later...the German-Soviet treat[ies were] signed... Many international observers at that time overlooked Pravda's warning and concentrated the attention exclusively on the two treaties..." The allegorical implication would seem to be that a softening of Soviet policy is not to be expected.

Meanwhile, an extremely nasty piece in Sovetskaya Rossiya appeared on 16 September linking Washington and German "revanchism" and claiming "a third world war is coming to a head."

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The Soviet public has still not been informed about the Reagan-Gromyko meeting.

2. The Ogarkov story has gotten more complicated. [] report that he's been assigned to head the Voroshilov General Staff Academy sounds convincing; he cites several Soviet, including military, sources. It's a demotion for sure, but still a prestigious post that keeps Ogarkov in Moscow able to pronounce on doctrinal matters, and possibly on hold for a resumption of his career. [] now adds his voice to those claiming Ogarkov will head a new Western Military Theater command. Whatever the future fate of Ogarkov, some powerful people in both the military and the KGB want us to believe that Ogarkov is down, but not out. Somebody may be protecting him for a future turn of political fortunes.

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H 3. [The only indication from Soviet sources about new things Gromyko might raise at the UNGA is a Lomeiko press conference statement giving somewhat unusual attention to the nuclear non-proliferation theme. He mentions Israel as a proliferation threat. ~~But~~ This coincides with a new and especially heavy air attack on Pakistan at a time when the Paks are clearly worried about an Indian attack on their facilities, and the Soviets have knowledge that the US has been concerned. This suggests to me that Gromyko may unveil some new "plan" to address Indo-Pak tensions on the nuclear front, to seize a diplomatic initiative before the US does, and to put pressure on Pakistan's Afghan policy.] The Soviets might go this route if they had reason to believe the Indians would not attack Pakistan but know everyone is worried that they might.

4. Finally, Soviet custody of the American ship Frieda-K and its crew on Chukotsk gives some elements in the Soviet leadership, including the KGB which apprehended them, leverage over the course of US-Soviet relations in the next several weeks.

5. Any comprehensive interpretation of all this is bound to be mostly guesswork. But my hunch is that Soviet foreign policy and control over it are falling victim to the top-priority concern of all Soviet leaders: the succession struggle.

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